



(U) Reflections on NSA by a Special Operations Commander

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(S) NSA recently hosted a visit by **Rear Admiral William McRaven, Deputy Commander, Task Force Omaha**. Admiral McRaven met with a variety of individuals and organizations that provide support to Special Operations Forces (SOF) missions in both the Iraq and Afghanistan/Pakistan AORs*, and in the process was updated on ongoing activities of interest and concern to the SOF Community.

(S) In addition to being heavily engaged in the briefings and discussions that transpired throughout the day, Admiral McRaven also took opportunity to relay his great appreciation for the ongoing and continuous support that NSA provides to the SOF missions. Admiral McRaven spoke quite openly and personally to those "in the room," but it was clear that he was really speaking to the NSA community at large. Summarized below are a few of the paraphrased thoughts expressed by Admiral McRaven during his visit -- thoughts that he would have undoubtedly shared personally with each of us, had time and opportunity allowed. Please take a moment and read these thoughts, and just for a moment shed your humility and be proud of the work that we are doing in support of this critical fight. (RDML McRaven is certainly proud!!)

Speaking on NSA Staff as Critical Members of the TF Omaha Team...

(S) I was recently asked by a senior military commander to comment on the success of the TF Omaha operations in theater. As I relayed the significant and absolutely critical support provided by organizations like the NSA, it became clear to me that there was a lack of appreciation for the depth and breadth of support that NSA provides. I was able to share with this senior leader that although our Special Forces teams are responsible for the final end-game action, we are heavily reliant on the support provided by our NSA teammates to achieve our success, and absent that support, TF Omaha would certainly not achieve the level of success that we currently enjoy.

Speaking on Expeditionary Cryptology...

(S) Everywhere I visited today I ran into and became re-acquainted with NSA staff that I had first known through their direct support to the SOF mission in either the Iraq or Af/Pak AORs. You are successfully leveraging the unique expertise and experiences developed during your staff's tenure in theater by placing them in SOF support roles upon their return home. This clearly demonstrates how your Expeditionary Cryptology focus continues to pay dividends long after the initial deployment is over.

Speaking on the Impact of SIGINT on SOF Operations...

(S//SI) TF Omaha operations in the Iraq theater are almost exclusively INTEL driven -- roughly 40% driven by HUMINT, and 60% based on SIGINT. However, whereas the HUMINT is often imprecise and sometimes leads to tactical "dry holes", our SIGINT leads typically yield about a 90-95% success ratio -- when SIGINT says a target is "there", it's typically there.

Speaking on the Difference that NSA Is Making In the Fight...

(U//FOUO) You may not see it so clearly back here at NSAW, but I can tell you that on a daily basis I see, very clearly, how your efforts both here at home as well as in the theater are making a difference. You are in the fight, and you are significantly enhancing our combat operations. By doing so you are saving lives, not only of Iraqi citizens, but more importantly you are saving lives of our troops. And as the guy sending troops out on very dangerous missions, I greatly appreciate every advantage we can glean.

*(U) Note:
AOR = Area of Responsibility

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